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ABSTRACT

This volume, the first of two, documents a selection of current worldwide research and activities and new developments in the area of distance-taught higher education. An introductory editorial summarizes the current status of distance teaching in higher education and identifies trends drawn from the reports collected. Details of origins, size, the student body, courses, media and methods, production and delivery systems, government, and finance are provided for Deakin University and the University of New England, Australia; the Radio and Television Universities of the People's Republic of China; University of the South Pacific, Fiji; University of Air (Hoso Diagaku), Japan; Allama Iqbal Open University, Pakistan; Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, Thailand; and the Open University, United Kingdom. Other international initiatives and developments are outlined in reports describing the Centres de Tele-enseignement Universitaire and Ecole Normale Superieure de Saint-Cloud, France; distance education in Swedish Universities; the International Council for Distance Education Research Committee; and the United Nations University/International Centre for Distance Learning. (LMM)

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DERG Papers

Number 10a

TRENDS IN DISTANCE HIGHER EDUCATION

PART I

Edited by Peter Raggatt and Keith Harry

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The Open University

Distance Education Research Group

March 1984

society for research into higher education
limited
at the University Guildford Surrey GU2 5XH (0483) 3900

Editorial: An *Embarras de Richesse* in 'Distance Education'

A familiar problem of editors of publications like the 'IN' is usually the soliciting of sufficient material to make up an issue. Gratifyingly for this, as with our last issue, the guest editors, Peter Raggatt and Keith Harry of the Open University, have exceeded their expectations by a large margin. Rather than reject many high quality contributions in an arbitrary way, the International Committee has decided to spread our current special topic over two issues, which together will provide a comprehensive review of the 'state of the art' for all those with interest in Distance Teaching and Learning - which probably includes the considerable majority of SRHE members.

More general news items and information will be contained in a 'IN' supplement to be sent out with the next issue of the Bulletin. A similar approach will be adopted for our Autumn issue. So, if you have any such items please let me have them before the end of August. Remember too that you are welcome to send in details of any overseas visit you are planning, if you would like to get in touch with SRHE members (or indeed others!) with similar interests.

Malcolm G Cornwall

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GUEST EDITORIAL

This is the first of two volumes that document a selection of current research activities and new developments in the proliferating area of distance-taught higher education. Our principal objectives in compiling the volumes are twofold: 1) to illustrate the scale and diversity of distance teaching in higher education worldwide, and 2) in at least a small way to encourage contact between individuals and institutions with a view to exchanging knowledge and experience. In this editorial which serves to introduce both volumes we also attempt to fill in some of the major gaps which selection has forced upon us, and to draw out some trends from the material which we have collected.

During the 1970s and 1980s, distance taught higher education provision has expanded dramatically in Western Europe, North America, Asia and Australasia. In some countries, e.g. Australia, there was already a long tradition of university distance teaching; in other countries, such as Pakistan, however, such provision was quite new. Patterns of development have varied considerably in relation to a multiplicity of factors, amongst which some of the most significant are the degree of political support, the extent of existing educational provision, the quality and extent of communications, the availability of human and financial resources, and the nature of the problems which distance education has been designed to alleviate. Several countries, e.g. Thailand, Pakistan and Israel, have established a national open university, whereas different models have evolved in other countries. The development of distance teaching in higher education is described in some detail in G. RUMBLE and K. HARRY (eds) (1982) The distance teaching universities, London, Croom Helm.

Almost all of the institutions described in these volumes are located in the geographical areas mentioned above. This is primarily because of the editorial necessity to select rigorously, but is also partly because contributions have not been forthcoming from certain institutions which we would have liked to include. In fact, in the case of certain countries, our final selection still represents only a very small proportion of the higher education distance teaching activities which are operating. Deakin University and the University of New England, for example, are only 2 of the 30-odd institutions offering higher education courses at a distance in Australia. Empire State College, New York, is one of the vast number of institutions in the United States which employ distance teaching media and/or methods. The International University Consortium, of which we include a

descriptive account, links some of them. Over 60 United States universities have a department which teaches at a distance, usually by correspondence; a similar situation exists in India, where more than 25 universities have correspondence course departments.

Our East German contributor indicates the broad extent of distance education provision in his country; there are also well-established and widespread systems in other East European countries. The Soviet Union has over 1,000 higher education institutions which teach at least a part of their programme through distance education in some form. The main concentration of distance education in South and Central America is below tertiary level, but there are national open universities in Costa Rica and Venezuela, as well as university distance teaching departments in other countries including Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Peru.

To complete this brief survey, the following institutions, each remarkable in its way, operate in countries which have not so far been mentioned. In Asia, the Open University of Sri Lanka has an extensive programme of technician training; the Korea Air Correspondence University is one of the largest of the distance teaching universities with well over 100,000 students; Universiti Sains Malaysia is a science university with an off campus programme; and the privately funded University of East Asia Open College, Macau, uses 'off-the-peg' courses produced by other distance teaching institutions. In Africa, the University of South Africa is an old established distance teaching university relying primarily on printed materials. Many of its black students are provided with tutorial support by a separate organisation, the South African Council for Higher Education (SACHED). The University of Zimbabwe Science Teaching Centre has produced science courses which are currently in use in 650 schools throughout Zimbabwe. This is not an exhaustive survey, but serves to indicate the proliferation of distance teaching activity in higher education. In the UK, the Open University is not the only institution of higher education which teaches at a distance. Other institutions with distance teaching programmes include the Universities of Birmingham, Strathclyde and Surrey , and Dundee College of Education. Expansion seems likely to continue in may parts of the world in the forseeable future. Proposals for the establishment of an open university have recently been discussed in each of the following countries: Bangladesh, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Italy, Nigeria, Portugal, Taiwan and Turkey.

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Many of the developments reported here were initiated or sponsored by governments as (i) a policy response to the demand for equal educational opportunity and (ii) serving particular manpower needs. The former is usually expressed in individual charters or in the stated aims of the institutions as providing a 'second chance' for those who left their studies at an early age, or as providing opportunities for higher education for 'disadvantaged' social groups and for those in full-time employment. Teachers, and in some countries government officials, have been particular target groups for manpower training and upgrading. Distance education provides a means for teachers to obtain an academic degree or to otherwise improve their professional qualifications while continuing to work in the schools. In many distance teaching institutions teachers comprise the largest enrolled occupational group. They constitute 43% of enrolments at the Télé-université, Quebec, 30% in the Chinese radio and television universities, and 28% at Deakin University, Australia; at the UK Open University the numbers have fallen from 33% in the early years to 11% in 1983 due primarily to the establishment of secondary teaching as a graduate profession.

Notwithstanding the commonly stated purpose of providing a second chance, the principal beneficiaries of distance education have been white-collar workers. None of the institutions described in this volume has a preponderance of working class students. In this respect it will be interesting to watch developments in China, where study groups are often based in factories, though here too it can be anticipated that managerial and administrative personnel will be most heavily represented. What accounts for this imbalance between social groups? No single explanation emerges. The high number of teachers enrolled is clearly one factor, but even where their numbers have fallen sharply as in the UK Open University there has been little change in the class composition of the student body.

A second factor is the policy of many distance teaching universities to demand the same entry qualifications as conventional universities, with the exception that special provision may be made for mature students. This policy provides a ready-made defence against accusations of 'second rate' educational standards. But this second factor does not provide a complete explanation for the preponderance of white-collar workers since the same phenomenon also exists in institutions in North America, the UK, Israel and Sweden, where open admissions policies are operated and analyses of students' occupational groups have been undertaken. A third, and probably the most significant, factor is the capacity of the middle classes to take advantage of new opportunities more quickly than other groups.

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Recent trends in course development suggest that distance teaching institutions will continue to serve a predominantly white-collar population. One current line of development is the establishment of taught higher degrees. A second and more significant growth area is personnel development. This area subsumes the wide range of courses which have been developed to serve particular occupational needs - administration, management, business, computing, nursing, policing and other professional activities. The development of taught higher degrees is a natural extension of university provision. Personnel development, on the other hand, has usually been a peripheral activity in universities, but it is here, in both North and South, that the majority of new developments are taking place. Tighter budgets are forcing universities to pay greater attention to the market place, to identify specific target groups, to discuss ideas with sponsors, and to prepare courses leading to professional diplomas or which otherwise serve occupational needs. But governments too are more actively involved in providing funds for specific developments, and strong advice if not directives on priorities. Thus, while academic content almost always continues to be the responsibility of the individual institution, the programme balance appears to be shifting towards courses which are occupationally relevant.

A further notable development in course production is the emergence of collaboration between institutions. North America is currently a breeding ground for collaborative relationships, a fact which is reflected in our inclusion of articles on consortia from both Canada and the United States. The most technically innovative development in the area of collaboration, however, is not associated with North America. Deakin University, Australia, and the University of Strathclyde, Scotland, have begun to use electronic mailing in the collaborative development of distance learning materials for a Master's Degree in Business Administration.

Technological advances and the establishment of the potential educational effectiveness of particular media are constantly affecting course delivery systems. The correspondence text is still the principal medium employed by the vast majority of distance teaching institutions, but the reported new developments in the articles below reveals a widespread desire to introduce additional supplementary teaching media such as television, video, radio and audio cassettes, and interactive computer facilities. The potential applicability of forms of new technology such as interactive video and electronic mailing, and of systems such as the UK Viewdata and Prestel and the Canadian Telidon, are continuously monitored by those institutions which could feasibly make use of them. The teaching process is not the only crea

affected by computer technology; there are also numerous applications in university administration and in assessment.

The trends described above have been adduced from the articles which follow. There is undoubtedly much scope in these and other areas for collaborative comparative research studies. For example, we have speculated that the recent emphasis on occupationally related courses is at least in part a function of government influence. This hypothesis requires empirical testing which would in addition throw light on the mechanisms and processes through which that influence is effected and on the ways in which it is mediated at institutional levels.

International support for associations and groupings which link distance teaching institutions worldwide or in particular regions has grown significantly in the 1980s. These organisations have each expressed interest in encouraging both research and collaboration. The Twelfth World Conference of the International Council for Distance Education (ICDE) approved the addition to the Council's constitution of an amendment to include the object 'To conduct and promote research and scholarship on distance education'. The first fruits of this commitment are described below in the accounts of the work of the Council's Research Committee and of the computerized information system based on the Open University International Documentation Centre for Distance Learning. The Australian and South Pacific External Studies Association (ASPESA) has, like the ICDE, been in existence for some years; it funds research projects in and study visits to the ASPESA region. The Programa de Integración Universitaria y Teleducación Capricornia is an association of universities in South and Central America which have a distance teaching programme or an interest in distance teaching. Two recently established associations with members teaching higher education at a distance are the Distance Education Council of Asia (DECASIA) and the African Association for Correspondence Education.

The spectacular expansion of distance teaching in higher education has produced a corresponding expansion in the literature. The emergence of what may establish itself as a new discipline in education has not unnaturally been accompanied by a growing body of theoretical works. In addition, a considerable proportion of the literature is devoted to institutional research, a fact which could have been deduced from the information on research which is provided in the articles which follow. Much of this type of research is written up in reports which are seldom published, but are frequently available in semi-published form. Journals are a more easily visible

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indication of the growth of the literature. ASPESA publishes Distance education, the most scholarly journal devoted solely to this topic, and also a newsletter. The ICDE has published a bulletin since 1983 which contains articles and news items on all aspects of distance education. Many institutions produce journals, for internal and external consumption. One of the most notable is the UK Open University's Teaching at a distance, to which a companion Institutional research review was added in 1982; the publication of Teaching at a distance is currently under suspension, and the UKOU/BBC international magazine Open line ceased publication with the September 1983 issue. Both publications have fallen victim to a factor which in the 1980s affects the activities of almost all distance teaching institutions, namely acute shortage of funds. Taking the pessimistic view, the long-term effects of the current worldwide economic crisis on distance teaching institutions as on all other educational institutions could be crippling. On the other hand, distance education's wide applicability, its flexibility and its potential cost effectiveness should be thrown into sharp focus by the need to obtain the maximum benefit from a shrinking education budget. The increasing interest of distance educators in one another's activities, of which the present Newsletter is one example, is symptomatic of the increasing necessity to cut costs by benefiting from the prior experience of others, and by investigating the possible advantages of cooperation or collaboration in some form.

Both volumes are organized in two sections. The first comprises brief descriptions of institutions generally including details of origins, size, the student body, courses, media and methods, production and delivery system, government and finance. These details are followed by brief descriptions of institutional and personal research and of recent developments. We make no apology for the fact that several separate pieces are included describing aspects of the UK Open University, the institution with which both editors are associated. This extended coverage reflects the volume of the research and development within the OU and the interest which is expressed in it. The second section is concerned with other international initiatives and developments.

Our guidelines to contributors were very exacting. In most cases the developments which they have reported merit much more space than we could give, and we are indeed grateful to our colleagues for keeping so closely to the length which we prescribed. Even so the very high and welcome level of response to our invitation to contribute has led to the publication of two volumes rather than one and hence a regrettable delay in publishing some of our earliest contributions.

Peter Raggatt, School of Education
The Open University
Keith Harry, International Documentation Centre for Distance Learning

AUSTRALIA

DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

Paul Northcott, Chairman, Distance Education Unit, Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria 3217, Australia

Origins: Deakin University was established by Act of the Parliament of Victoria on 10 December, 1974. It grew out of discussions in the early 1970s about a fourth University for Victoria (the three already in existence, Melbourne, Monash and La Trobe were in Melbourne, the state capital) and an Open University for Australia.

It was formed by amalgamating the Gordon Institute of Technology and the State College of Victoria at Geelong, a Teachers' College. It was conceived originally as being responsible for providing University level distance education (synonymously referred to as external studies or off-campus studies) mainly for the states of Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania and to act as a regional University for the Geelong environs as Deakin is the only institution of higher education in the area.

An Interim Council ran the University from 22 January, 1975 to 1 January, 1978. Since 1978, there has been a Council of the University as constituted by the Deakin University Act.

The University was officially opened on 1 April, 1977 and enrolled its first students (2,445 total) in the same year - all on-campus, as Deakin took over students enrolled in the two institutions named above. The first distance students enrolled in 1978.

Students: In 1983, total student enrolments were 5,676. Of this total 1,597 were full-time on campus students, 601 part-time on campus and 3,478 off campus students. Thus 40 per cent are on campus students and 60 per cent off campus. The proportions are reversed if measured according to student teaching load. Students enrol in one of three groups:

Normal - i.e. students who have successfully completed either Higher School Certificate (HSC) or the Tertiary Orientation Programme (TOP).

Advanced standing - i.e. exemptions granted for recognized previous tertiary studies.

Special - i.e. mature age students who have not completed secondary education and other students not included in the above groups such as complementary enrolments by students enrolled at other Univerisities who wish to study individual subjects with Deakin.

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For off-campus students, open entry applies only to BA (Humanities) and BA (Social Sciences). In total, the sexes are evenly represented. For off-campus students, however, females constitute 55% of the enrolment. In 1983, the median age of all students was 29.4 and of commencing students 27.8. The largest group of students is in the 30-39 age range - 31.2 per cent of total students and 30.7 per cent of commencing students.

Courses: A full range is offered on-campus by the six schools: bachelor degrees (pass and honours), graduate diplomas, masters and doctoral degrees. The six schools are as follows, 1983 per cent of total students shown in brackets: Humanities (28.6); Education (27.8); Sciences 14.1); Social Sciences (13.3); Management 11.4); Engineering and Architecture (4.8).

Courses offered off campus include a Master of Business Administration; Diploma, Bachelor's and Masters Courses in education, Bachelors courses in Humanities and Social Sciences and a Graduate Diploma in Computing.

The BA (Education) was more popular in the late 1970s when many teachers sought to upgrade their teacher training to degree status. This market has been largely satisfied and more enrolments are now being made in the B.Ed - a fourth year qualification - and the Graduate Diploma of Educational Administration and the Masters courses in education.

Humanities includes studies which are not extensively cultivated in other Victorian Universities and they emphasize an interdisciplinary approach. Courses include: Australian Studies, Journalism and Media Studies, Visual Arts, Performing Arts and Women's Studies. Women's Studies are being offered off-campus in conjunction with Queensland (Brisbane) and Murdoch (Perth) Universities.

Social Sciences courses also emphasize interconnections between disciplines and stress international (including defence and strategic) studies and cultural contacts between nations, including Australia. Although courses are multidisciplinary, major sequences may be chosen in Anthropological Studies, Historical Studies, Political Studies and Policy Studies.

A BA may be completed by including both Humanities and Social Sciences courses and also psychology courses from the School of Sciences (previously Education).

Distinctively innovatory courses are the MBA and Graduate Diplomas of Computing. From March 1981 to October 1983, Deakin was the only University in the world to offer an MBA which could be completed entirely by distance studies. Since October 1983, the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, also offers a distance

learning MBA. Deakin and Strathclyde, with British Council assistance, have developed an academic link and interchange scheme and are collaborating closely in the development of distance learning MBA course materials. The Graduate Diploma of Computing overcomes the problem often faced by science and technology courses of how to incorporate practical, hands-on experience in distance courses. The hardware, in the form of a home microcomputer, is linked to the University's mainframe computer by acoustic coupler and the teaching is conducted, in part, by electronic mail.

Media and methods: Heavy reliance is placed on print (study guides and readers) although audio-cassettes and video cassettes are used. About 100 new audio programmes are produced each year and between 8 and 12 video programmes. Microcomputer programmes are prepared for the MBA and Graduate Diploma of Computing. Electronic mail is used heavily in the Graduate Diploma of Computing. Courses are produced by course teams composed of teaching staff, instructional designers, editors, graphic designers and media staff.

Counselling and tutorial student support services are provided. There is a network of study centres in Victoria.

Assessment: A variety of forms are used. Continuous self-assessment activities are included in the study guides. Formal assessment includes assignments (i.e. continuous assessment) and end of semester examination. The academic year is based on two, fifteen week semesters: March - June and July - November. Examinations are held in July and November.

Government and Administration: This is based on two committees. Council and Academic Board. All other committees report to either Council or Academic Board.

Until July 1982, Deakin had a Centre for Educational Services (CES) which was a separate division responsible for the special needs of off-campus students. The CES functions were redistributed after mid 1982 and were integrated with on campus administration. The rationale was that as 60 per cent of Deakin's students are off-campus students, it did not make sense that they should be administered by an offshoot of the main administration. The Distance Education Unit, (DEU) which is an academic unit, was formed by grouping the instructional designers working with course team. The DEU is dedicated to providing advice to course teams on instructional design and to teaching, research and consultancy in distance education.

Control and institutional research: Responsibility for quality control rests with the Dean of Schools who will institute such evaluation studies as deemed to be necessary. Deans usually delegate this responsibility to course team chairpersons. Course team chairpersons of distance education courses are responsible for the academic quality of courses; the educational effectiveness of the course as a distance education programme; and for producing the course on time, within the budget and within the length stipulations. Evaluation studies are also undertaken by the Distance Education Unit in collaboaration with either the Schools or Adminstration or both.

Finance: The total annual expenditure in the year ending 31 December, 1982 was $A20.4m. Of this total, 56.6 per cent was spent on teaching and research, 15.8 per cent on academic services (library, computing, other), 26.6 per cent general University services (administration, overheads, buildings and grounds) and 1 per cent on student services. Funds are provided by the Commonwealth Government of Australia as provided for by the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Assistance Act. Tuition fees are not charged for tertiary education in Australia.

RESEARCH INTERESTS IN DISTANCE EDUCATION: 1. Telecommunications technology:

(i) Satellite use - ATS-1 prior exprimentation (voice and data) for AUSSAT system in 1985. Deakin has its own ground station. Research has been completed on antenna design. There is continuing research on the atmospheric and ionospheric effects of satellite signals and possiblities for visual communication.

(ii) Student use of home microcomputers as stand alone and with acoustic couplers to link with Deakin's mainframe computer.

(iii) Teletutorials - discussion of case studies and group decision making (MBA programme) - use of automatic telephone bridge and voice-switching equipment.

RESEARCH INTERESTS IN DISTANCE EDUCATION: 2. Evaluation of methods:

(i) Course teams - with particular reference to staff attitudes to working in course teams.

(ii) Weekend schools.

(iii) Course remakes (methodology and practice).

(iv) Applications of instructional design.

(v) Uses of media.

RESEARCH INTERESTS IN DISTANCE EDUCATION: 3. Student Needs:

(i) Sociological studies of distance education students, including their contact needs.

(ii) Attrition rate studies.

(iii) Information needs of distance students with particular reference to libraries - experimentation with INMATTS telephone links and microcomputer links to on-line computer access to library catalogue.

(iv) Transformation of distance teaching materials to make them accessible for study by disabled students.

RESEARCH INTERESTS IN DISTANCE EDUCATION: 4. Policy Studies: The co-ordination and collaboration in distance education provision nationally and within Victoria.

The Distance Education Unit is responsible for supervising MA and Ph.D candidates in distance education by research. A coursework M.Ed. in distance education is being prepared for 1986. The M.Ed. in distance education will require a major dissertation to be completed.

AUSTRALIA

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND

Kevin Smith, Director, Department of External Studies, University of New England, Armidale, NSW2351, Australia

Origins: This was established in 1938 as a College of the University of Sydney. It became an autonomous institution in 1954 as a result of the University of New England Act (December, 1953) of New South Wales State Parliament. The Act gave the Council of the University the power to offer external courses through the establishment of a Department of External Studies. The first external courses (toward B.A. degree) were offered in 1955 (363 students enrolled).

Students: In 1983, 8,743 students were enrolled of which 6,009 were external students. The five major groups of external students include:

(a) Teachers/lecturers - 30.22%
(b) People in the Professions and Arts - 17.19%
(c) Clerical/office workers - 14.28%
(d) Full-time domestic - 10.65%
(e) Administrators/managers - 10.15%

External applicants must normally have reached the age of 20 years by 1st March in the year in which they wish to enrol. Applicants under the age of 23 are normally required to have formal entry requirements while those over 23 may apply for mature age admission. Applicants in the latter category have their work and educational experience since leaving school considered.

Courses: Only credit courses are offered. The four faculties - Arts, Economic Studies, Education and Resource Management - offer:

(a) Six first degrees - Bachelor of Arts (including Honours), Bachelor of Social Science, Bachelor of Economics (including Honours), Bachelor of Financial Administration, Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning (including Honours) and Bachelor of Education.

(b) Twelve post-graduate diplomas - including for example, Diploma in Social Science, Diploma in Business Studies, Diploma in Natural Resources and Diploma in Continuing Education.

(c) Seven masters degrees - including for example, Master of Letters, Master of Urban and Regional Planning and Master of Educational Administration.

The language of instruction is English.

Media and methods: Correspondence text is the main medium of instruction. Face-to-face contact through compulsory residential schools (the majority are at the University) is considered to be a key element. Audio-tapes are used extensively. No use is made of radio or T.V.

Assessment: All courses require the submission of essays and/or exercises The non-submission of assignments results in a student being withdrawn, usually with failure, from his/her course. Course results are decided on the basis of continuous assessment and examination(s), the usual proportion is 40:60.

Government and administration: The supreme governing body is the Council which has 'entire control and management of the affairs and concerns of the University....' The Vice-Chancellor is the chief executive officer of the University and the Academic Board is the principal academic body of the University. Academic staff are grouped in departments and departments into faculties, the latter are headed by Deans.

Control and institutional research: Academic control is exercised through Heads of Departments, Faculties and Academic Board. Quality control is minimal. Some institutional research is carried out by members of Faculty of Education, Academic Secretariat and Department of External Studies.

Finance: Financed on triennial basis by Federal Government. No tuition fees are charged.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS: 1. Pre-Enrolment Counselling: The increasing number of mature age students has made it essential that such students be given a realistic indication of what University study involves. This has been attempted by:

(a) Providing voluntary orientation weekends on campus. These programmes cover academic, administrative and student-support with the view to encouraging student interaction and mutual support. Research suggests a positive correlation with higher retention and achievement rates for orientation programme participants.

(b) Conducting pre-enrolment programmes in the Sydney metropolitan area - a source of approximately 40% of all external students.

(c) Establishing a Sydney Information Centre which enables prospective Sydney students to obtain on the spot information and advice.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS: 2. Regional Advisory Network: An attempt to decentraiize student support services. Until 1981 the University relied almost entirely on providing this support through the central Department of External Studies. Thirteen advisers have been appointed and they are, in the main. external graduates. After only 20 months of operation the value of the Network to enrolled students is beyond doubt. The University does not operate study centres.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS: 3. Replacement of Manual Systems with Computer Based Administrative Systems: This changevoer has been accelerated as a result of financial and staffing cut-backs. Of special significance has been the development of a student assignment recording system which has been integrated with the basic student record system. This development was an Australian first and it has been adopted and adapted by other institutions throughout the country.

A computer system has also been developed to allocate college accommodation for residential schools. This system has proved to be very efficient, especially in terms of reducing the manpower required and in providing earlier advice to students. The magnitude of the problem can be gauged by the need to accommodate some 4,500 students in colleges supplying some 1,400 beds in 4 intakes over a period of 15 days.

RESEARCH ACTIVITY: Each year the Department of External Studies prepares a Statistical Summary which provides infcrmation on enrolments, age distribution, occupational distribution, and enrolment patterns. Recent research includes:

Motivation and Persistence at External Tertiary Studies: The Mature Age open entry student.

Orientation Programmes for External Students - Do they work?

A majo: study is presently under way to:

(i) define the "isolated" student;

(ii) determine whether there is any significant difference between withdrawal rates, pass rates and level of pass of isolated versus non-isolated students.

This study is being supported financially by the Australian and South Pacific External Studies Association (A.S.P.E.S.A.)

CHINA

RADIO AND TELEVISION UNIVERSITES OF THE PEOPLE's REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Bob McCormick, School of Education, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, United Kingdom.

The RTVU in its present form began preparing courses in 1979. It is now the largest distance-learning multi-media system in the world with some half-million students. It is a national, multi-media system intended to promote the modernization of China, to raise the level of scientific education and to repair the damage done to education by the 'gang of four'. It has a central body responsible for course design and material production and works closely with the 28 local television universities (one for each province or autonomous region) which are responsible for the registration and organization of students.

The RTVU offers 3-year undergraduate courses in Science and Technology, Chinese Language, and Economics and Management (1). The university wishes to establish degrees in Civil and Chemical Engineering and possibly in Arts, Social Science and Chinese Literature.

Students study full-time at a local centre serving several factories etc. The quality of facilities,opportunity for experimental work and so on vary considerably and this is clearly a problem for an institution committed to science and technology. Assessment is by examination at the end of each semester.

Several extended descriptions of the RTVU are available (2).

RESEARCH INTERESTS: R.McCormick is carrying out research into distance learning in PRC in several phases. The first focuses upon some general development issues - it is planned to have 2 million students by the end of the decade. These issues are related to the general situation in higher education in China: job allocation and the nature of courses. Self-study is a developing phenomena and is related to the RTVU, and the impact of this is also being investigated. This phase should be the subject of an article in the early part of 1984.

The second phase will extend knowledge about RTVU but will also look at correspondence education. Further phases will consider self-study in more detail as this develops in China, as well as carrying out a fuller survey of other distance learning initiatives.

The material for this research is based upon a recent period spent in China, as well as extensive use of Chinese sources (newspapers, radio broadcasts, journals and other documents available to foreigners). Some of the latter sources were consulted in the Universities Service Centre, Hong Kong and in the School of Oriental and African Studies, London.

It is hoped that a further period of work in China will be possible within the next few years.

(1) Universities offer two kinds of degrees: 4 year degrees (benke), roughly equivalent to British degrees; 3-year degrees (Zhuanke) are of a lower level and often more vocationally oriented. However, in general all degrees in China are more specialised than in Britain.

(2) See for example, D.HAWKRIDGE, and R.McCORMICK (1983) 'China's Television Universities', British Journal of Educational Technology, No.3, Vol.14, October 1983, pp.160-73; and R.McCORMICK, 'The Central Broadcasting and Television University, People's Republic of China', in G.RUMBLE and K.HARRY, (eds) (1982) The Distance Teaching Universities, London, Croom Helm, pp.54-71.

FIJI

UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC

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Origins: The University of the South Pacific was formally established in 1970 in accordance with the wishes and to serve the needs of the Governments of Solomon Islands, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, the Tokelau Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Western Samoa. Extension Services began its operations with the School of Education in 1970 and became an autonomous unit of the University in 1974. Its purpose is to offer University studies off campus and to initiate and facilitate all manner of continuing education. Part of Extension Services are University Extension Centres located in nine of the USP regional countries through which the University's presence and work in the region is strengthened and coordinated.

Students: In 1983, enrolments in Extension Studies (credit) courses in each of the two semesters exceeded 2000. Most students were over 21 years of age and in paid employment; many were teachers. For students over 23 years of age admission to credit course study is subject only to the judgement of the Director of the applicant's USP Centre.

Courses: There are three main levels of the 40 courses offered each semester: Preliminary (Form 6), Foundation (Form 7), and Degree Year 1. Some courses at Degree Year 2 level are being offered in 1984 and the number of these will increase steadily in coming years. Vocational courses in Education, Librarianship, Administration, and Accounting, are also offered. The language of instruction is English. Programmes of study are at Certificate, Diploma, and Degree levels, degree courses of each former programme being subsumed in each latter one.

Media and methods: The basic medium is printed materials. Commercial textbooks, audio tapes, and local and satellite tutorials supplement some course materials, and laboratories and workshops are conducted in regional centres by University staff from the Suva campus.

Assessment: By University regulations, all courses must be assessed within the limits of no less than 40% and no more than 60% for both course work and final examination. Assignments and tests contribute to course work assessment in most courses.

Government and administration: The major governing body is the Council of the University, academic and quality control of Extension Services being exercised on behalf of the Council by the Senate and Academic Committee.

Finance: Basic funding of Extension Services is from University sources, but tuition, textbooks and other materials, and USP Centre fees are charged for each course.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS: USP Sub-Centres are being established in various countries of the region. Greater attention is being paid to improving local resources for learning through library expansions, and through increased employment of local tutors and markers.

The quality of satellite tutorials is being improved through better planning and organization. To strengthen this learning/teaching medium, computer data print-out is being added to the voice communication link, and facsimile transmission via satellite is being experimented with.

Because of the uncertainty concerning the 'life' of the ATS-1 satellite, the University will be attempting in 1984 to determine the way in which it will maintain in the future its excellent and invaluable voice communication links between its campuses and regional Centres. Considerable anxiety about this complex matter exists in Extension Services at the end of 1983.

The full Preliminary and Foundation Studies programmes of the University are now available through Extension Studies. It is possible to complete 100-level degree courses (eight required) for several 'Arts' degree programmes, and to complete two full Certificate programmes of the School of Social and Economic Development (in Accounting and Administrative Studies). In 1985 the Diploma stages of these programmes will be available through Extension, more 'Arts' degree 100-level courses will be offered, and more 200-level courses also. The expansion of course offerings will be controlled to ensure rational growth.

The use of audio cassettes to enrich learning materials is increasing, and the use of radio broadcasts is being considered. A start is being made with the production of thirty-minute video cassettes to introduce programmes and courses in 1984.

It is likely that there will be increased activity in the areas of librarianship, business studies, food, health and nutrition, and technology arising out of regional expressed needs.

RESEARCH ACTIVITY: Several 'in-house' investigations were conducted by the four members of the Course Development staff of Extension Services in 1983:

- trends in enrolments in Extension Studies by Centres and by courses, 1971 to 1983;
- 'turn-round' times of a sample of course assignments sent for marking to the Suva campus;
- the effects on performances of allowing students to transfer from the normal one- to a two-semester schedule in some sample courses.

Several larger research projects are in hand:

- an initial description of the nature and possible effects of satellite tutorials, to be followed by an experimental piece of research
- an investigation of faculty and institutional attitudes towards and factors involved in inward- and outward-transferability of (science) materials; and the designing of a descriptive profile of such materials to aid adoption consideration. (This is being undertaken in conjunction with the Open Learning Institute of British Columbia, and the Universiti Sains Malaysia.)
- contribution to the ICDE International Research Project on the completion and drop-out rates of Extension Studies students
- Planning of a major project to investigate the ways in which our Extension Studies students actually utilise the learning materials sent to them is in its initial stages.

JAPAN

UNIVERSITY OF AIR (HOSO DAIGAKU)

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Origins: The University was established in January 1983 by the University of the Air Foundation which was set up in July 1981 following the Law of the University of the Air Foundation passed at the regular session of the National Diet in June 1981.

The aim is to provide a new educational instruction as a nucleus of the life long education system, by making effective use of radio and TV at university level education, i.e. to provide university level education for workers and housewives, to ensure a flexible opportunity for university education for those who complete secondary education and to provide the education of a new era, sharing the fruits of the latest research and educational techniques and to help the improvement of university education by promoting the exchange of teaching staff and the interchangeable credit system between existing universities and by extending the use of materials developed for the University of the Air(UA).
The first students will be enrolled in April 1985.

Students: At the beginning of 1985, 4,000 degree-course and 6,000 other students will enter. Four years later degree course entrants will number 7,000 and others 10,000. The eventual total capacities will be 20,000 degree-students and 10,000 other students.

Those over 18 years old will be able to enter according to the principle 'first comes first' or 'a lottery'.

Courses: Three courses each with two majors are planned:

Science of Living (Living & Welfare; Development & Education)

Industry and Society (Society & Economy; Industry & Technology)

Humanities and Natural Science (The Culture of Mankind; Understanding Nature).

Degree course students who study for over four years and obtain 124 or more credits will be university graduates credited with the title of B.A.

Media and methods: Radio, TV and textbook are the principal teaching media. Face-to-face tutorials, counselling and lectures are conducted in 6 study centres at the first stage. Radio and TV programmes are produced by the National Centre for Development of Broadcast Education under the control of Professors in the UA and transmitted through the UA Foundation Broadcasting Station.

Each week students will be required to watch and listen to four or five 45 minutes TV and radio programmes to study for four or five hours by themselves using textbooks and other materials and to go to a study centre to take lessons for about three hours.

Assessment: Written papers or computer marked tests will be taken at the end of each term.

Government and administration: The UA Foundation is responsible for financial accounting and for maintaining university facilities. It is a corporate body largely appointed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. The university will be responsible for the appointment of professors and other staff and for academic content.

Control and Institutional Research Academic Control: Professors are responsible for academic standards of course materials.

Quality Control: Institutional research must be carried out by the National Centre for Development of Broadcast Education with the cooperation of Professors in the university.

Finance: The University is financed by Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

PAKISTAN

ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY

S.Akhtar Hussain, Assistant Registrar, Allama Iqbal Open University Sector H/8, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Origins: The university was established in 1974 by Act of Parliament to provide 'part-time education through the use of mass-media and modern instructional techniques'. Specific functions were to provide 'educational facilities for people who cannot leave their homes and jobs', 'facilities for the training of teachers' and 'provision for instruction in such branches of learning, technology, or vocations as it may deem fit.' The first course was presented in 1975.

Students: 50,000 students were enrolled in 1981-82 and this number increased to 65,000 in 1982-83.

Courses: The main programmes are:

(i) MA level teacher education and also compulsory in-service orientation for 155,000 primary-school teachers.

(ii) General Education (Intermediate and Degree Level).

(iii) Functional Education (Skill oriented courses related to occupational of rural urban community needs.

(iv) Research and Development.

Teaching is in Urdu.

Media and methods: The principal medium of instruction is the correspondence text with television, radio, audio-cassette support material and equipment for science practical work and tutorial instruction (face to face/correspondence).

Assessment:

(i) Tutor-marked assignments.

(ii) Course-results are calculated from continuous assessment grades and examination grades at end-of-course examination.

Government and administration: The Executive Council exercises 'general supervision over the affairs and management of property of the University'; the Academic Council is the highest academic body. Academic staff are grouped in two faculties:

the Faculty of Basic & Applied Sciences which includes departments of Industrial Education & Business Management, Agricultural Sciences, Basic Sciences, Home Economics & Women Studies and the Faculty of Pedagogy, Social Sciences & Humanities which includes the Institute of Education and of Arabic & Islamic Studies and the departments of Urdu, Iqbaliat, English, Social Sciences.

Control and institutional research: Academic control is vested in the Academic Council which is responsible for standards of teaching research and accreditation. Quality control is maintained by the institutional research cell presently located in Institute of Education.

Finance: Major source of finance is grant from the Federal Government. Some income from Registration/Tuition/Examination fees.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT: This aspect of the University's activities must be seen in the context of conditions prevailing in many parts of the country. The 'low hope" areas, as they are sometimes called, are typified by low income, small and fragmented land holdings, low productivity, unemployment and underemployment, poor nutrition, high population growth rates and a paucity of civic provisions for health, housing education, transportation and communication. Such areas suffer further deprivation because of the large scale migration to urban area already overburdened and barely self-sustaining.

Improvement plans for rural areas have in the past generally been framed from an urban standpoint, with little reference to the people in the areas themselves. Such "external" strategies (often associated with foreign aid) foster dependence rather than self-help and do little to achieve long-term change. This can come only from within communities themselves. Outside help and cooperation are desirable, but the first task is the appreciation of the problems of low hope areas as seen by the communities themsleves. This appreciation must be accompanied by an awareness and understanding of resources (both material and human)

available locally, and by the full exploitation through well conceived educational programmes and broad-based institutional development.

To try and meet these needs, the University has initiated some significant programmes. The chief of these are three Integrated Functional Education projects. There are plans to extend this programme to further locations. Essentially, the projects adopt an educational package approach through a combination of consciousness-raising, the teaching of work and community skills, and an attack on illiteracy. As well as assisting the specific project areas towards the amelioration of their own conditions and towards a degree of self-help. The intention is to build up a core of new materials, new methodologies and training techiques that can be applied to, or adapted for use in, other parts of the country.

The implementation of each project involves a number of processes. These include initial contacts with target villages through the field functionaries of nation-building departments/agencies, baseline and need assessment surveys of the target villages, followed by the development of methodologies and instructional materials, the selection and training of village teachers, and the formation of learning groups.

All this is done by a specially recruited and trained team of field workers and coordinators who under the direction of the project coordinators visit classes to assist teachers and help to organize local community inputs to all parts of the programme. They are also responsible for gathering data of various kinds for evaluation and for the development of manuals and follow-up materials for use by the communities after the completion of the main project.

The first IFE Project was initiated in IRDP Markaz Daultala, District Rawalpindi, in a cluster of 20 villages in 1976-77. As the results were sufficiently encouraging for the University, the programme was extended to a second phase involving twenty-seven villages in the same locality. Encouraged by the outcome of this project, similar projects were launched in the other provinces of the country. The IFE Project Bhitshah (Sind) and Samahni (AJK) have now entered the second phase. At Saraj Naurang, the first phase of the Project is over, and at present the staff is busy in preparing for the launching of the second phase. The output of these projects has been very encouraging.

In each phase of every project, about 1000 men and women benefitted from the available facilities. They learn reading, writing and a little arithmetic for their daily use. In addition to this, they are provided with functional education for their social and economic development.

The purpose of these projects is to develop an initial approach to transform the rural sector of the country. They also aim to develop and enhance the standard of living of the rural people by teaching them literacy and some useful skills.

In addition to IFE, the University has plans to introduce a Functional Education Project for Rural Areas. This is essentially a research project, the main aim of which is to discover through systematic surveys, the types of basic functional course which will be most appropriate for education at the village level. The project will assist the University in preparing such courses on a pilot basis and will then introduce them in a specially selected rural area, experimenting with and monitoring different methods of presentation. The overall aim of the project is to help the University to acquire the knowledge, skills and experience needed to mount a large-scale programme of Basic, Functional Education for rural areas. An area has been selected as a test-bed for the newly developed basic courses in Gujrat District and the project is scheduled to commence in 1983.

Through its experiences with both the IFE Projects and with FEPRA, the University hopes to benefit the local inhabitants of the areas concerned. More important in the long-term, however, is that these experiences should enable the University to mount an effective national programme of basic education for the rural masses of Pakistan. It is here that the greatest needs exist and where the biggest challenge lies for it is by tapping and utilising this vast undeveloped pool of human resources that the nation can lay a surer foundation for its own progress and that of its individual members.

THAILAND

SUKHOTHAI THAMMATHIRAT OPEN UNIVERSITY

Dr.Tong-In Wangsotorn, Vice-Rector for Planning and Development, Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, Office of University Affairs, Sri Ayudhya Road, Bangkok 4, Thailand.

Origins: The STOU was created by Royal Charter on September 5, 1978 to provide home-based education for the Thai people. The university uses distance learning techniques to enable the students to study on their own without having to enter an actual classroom as in conventional universities. The first students were enrolled in 1980.

Students: The present study body (July 1983) numbers around 110,000. Approximately 75 per cent of the students are enrolled in the School of Educational Studies, Management Science, and Law. The average age of the students is 30, and approximately 55 per cent are male. Nearly 86 per cent of the students come from outside the Bangkok area, and roughly 70 per cent are government officials. Students may enter in the degree programme, without examination, if they:

(a) have completed 12 years of schooling or their equivalent; or

(b) have completed 10 years of schooling and had 5 years of work experience after receiving their certificates and are over 20 years of age as of the 1st of December of the enrolment year; or

(c) holders of diplomas or degrees of any level, from institutions of higher education approved by the STOU Academic Senate.

Courses: STOU offers two types of programmes: one for degree purposes and the other for non-degree purposes. Courses offered include those leading to a bachelor's degree in the following areas:

Educational Studies, Management Science, Law, Economics, Home Economics, Agricultural Extension and Co-operatives, Health Science, Political Science, Liberal Arts.

The university has also co-operated with various agencies in setting up programmes of personnel development as follows:

a bachelor's degree programme for non-commissioned police officers seeking promotion to the rank of commissioned police officer;

an educational and training programme for staff of the Department of Local Administration, sub-district and village-level administrators and their wives, and others who are involved in administrative work;

staff development programme for the Department of Landa;

a programme to improve the qualifications of the agricultural extension and cooperatives officials;

a programme to develop elementary school administrators throughout the country;

a programme to train Bank employees to produce self-instructional texts to be used in staff development programme at the Bank;

a programme to establish "STOU corners" in provincial public libraries throughout the country in order to provide services for students and the general public.

Teaching is in Thai.

STOU uses a two-semester system and allows its student to earn a degree in 4-12 years. Courses are arranged in blocks to provide an integrated study of interrelated subjects. Each block is worth 6 credits.

Media and Methods: The principal medium of instruction is the correspondence text. Television, radio, tape-cassettes are also used in most courses. Face-to-face tutorial classes are held at 77 local and regional study centres.

Assessment: Students take end-of course examinations.

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Government and administration: There are three major governing bodies:

The University Council which has power to lay down the university policies and to issue rules and regulations of the university;

Academic Senate which supervises the University's academic work, prescribing curricula, teaching and evaluation;and

The Committee of University Administrators which is responsible for the management and development of the university.

Control and institutional research: Project control is under the responsibility of the Vice-Rector for Operations. Institutional Research is carried out by Institutional Research Unit, Planning Division, Office of the Rector. Media research for the improvement of self-instructional materials is carried out by the Management Systems and Educational Media Research Section, Office of Educational Technology.

Finance: There are two sources of funding: governmental budget (15%) and University revenue derived from tuition and fees (85%).

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS:

1. Providing training resources for several government agencies in particularly for personnel development.
2. Offering new teaching programmes namely agricultural extension and co-operatives; and health science, both of which need laboratory facilities.
3. Introducing telephone counselling.
4. Intensive workshop and professional Experiences. Every STOU student who has accumulated the number of blocks required for a degree in a given area must take a comprehensive assessment. The assessment, either in the form of intensive workshop or professional experience is designed to evaluate the knowledge he has acquired and his potential in its application.
5. Planning for the establishment of permanent regional centres in four regions of Thailand in 1984 is now underway.

RESEARCH ACTIVITY: During 1982-1983, the following researches have been undertaken:

The Analysis of STOU Property and Procurement Administrative system;

Developing the Information System for Administration;

Academic Workload of Administrative Staff;

Study Demand in the Area of Communication Arts at Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University;

Attitudes towards the Development of the Teaching of Science and Technology by Way of Distance Education System;

Study of Graduates in the School of Educational Studies Majoring in Educational Administration;

Opinion towards Tutorial Lessons.

The Effectiveness of Media Used at Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University;

Costs Involved in Television Production;

The Demand for Radio and Television Time for Educational Purposes.

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UNITED KINGDOM

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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Peter Raggatt, School of Education, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA, UK

Origins: The Open University (OU) was established by Royal Charter in 1969 as 'an independent and autonomous institution' authorised to confer its own degrees. It provides a second chance to adults who have not received higher education, and has also developed an extensive continuing education programme. The first students were enrolled in 1971.

Students: At the beginning of 1984 the student body totalled around 108,000. Around 67,000 are undergraduate students, 600 are postgraduate students, and approximately 40,000 are enrolled as associate students on courses offered by the Centre for Continuing Education. In 1982, 44% of finally registered new students were women and 8% had no formal educational qualifications. The largest occupational groups were housewives (13%), teachers (12.2%), technical personnel (11.8%) and clerical and office staff (10.7%). More than 62,000 graduates have obtained their B.A. degree and around 9,000 of these have gone on to obtain a B.A. (Hons).

Applicants for undergraduate courses do not require formal qualifications but must be at least 21 years old.

Courses: The University's three programmes of study are:

(i) undergraduate (B.A.) programme. There are over 130 course options, including many multidisciplinary lower-level courses, in 1984.

(ii) postgraduate programme. The BPhil, MPhil and PhD degrees are primarily research-based but some taught Masters courses now operate.

(iii) associate student programme. More that 150 courses, most full-length but some short, are offered. Subject areas include: community education, in-service teacher training, health and social welfare, technological updating and management education.

6 credits are required for a B.A., 8 for a B.A. (Hons). A full credit is awarded on successful completion of a one-year course comprising 32 units of work, each unit requiring 12-15 hours of study. Half-credit courses require completion of 16 units of work over one year. Students can obtain a maximum of 2 credits per year.

Media and methods: The principal teaching medium is the printed correspondence text, supplemented by television, radio, audio cassettes, audio discs, slides, and home experiment kits. Lending services are operated for audio cassettes of radio programmes and video cassettes of television programmes. Tutorial assistance and counselling are offered through a system of around 260 study centres throughout the OU's 13 regions in the UK. Residential summer school of one week duration is compulsory in some courses.

Assessment: Self-assessment questions are included in all correspondence texts. Tutor-marked and computer-marked assignments form the continuous assessment element in most courses, but some courses contain an assessed project element. The award of a credit is dependent upon the student's performance in continuous assessment and in the 3-hour end-of-course examination; the weighting is roughly 50:50.

Control and institutional research: Academic control. Courses Committee considers all course proposals in the context of the University's academic plan. Formal academic approval rests with Academic Board and Senate. Quality control. Most evaluation within the OU is carried out by one of the following : (i) permanent, specialising evaluating groups, (ii) course teams, (iii) permanent committees and boards involving staff from different parts of the University, (iv) special working groups, and (v) individuals undertaking projects.

Finance: The OU is financed directly by the Department of Education and Science. Recurrent grant comprises about 80% of total income; the present government's policy is to increase the proportion to be contributed by student fees. The 1984 grant is £58,679,000. The Centre for Continuing Education is required to be self-financing from student fees and from sponsoring funds.

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH IN THE INSTITUTE OF EDUCAYIONAL TECHNOLOGY

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Right from the beginning of the OU's existence it has been recognised that institutional research (IR) is necessary. The bulk of the University's IR work is located within the Institute of Educational Technology. Officially speaking, part of the Institute is devoted to "institutional research" and the other half to "course development". In practice, there is very considerable blurring of the boundaries between divisions. Many IR investigations relate directly or indirectly to improvement of courses and teaching; equally, drawing together more systematically the results of practical experience of course teams designing courses is effectively a form of research into the institution itself.

Institutional research in universities generally has a chequered history, and quite a short one. The field is difficult to define precisely. Obviously, in the case of the OU, it implies the exploration of problems relating to a peculiar kind of higher education institution. Moreover, IR is usually regarded as applied or policy-related research, geared to improving the system by providing better information for decisions and by raising consciousness of issues among those making policy for the University.

To depict IR in these straightforward ways can, however, be misleading. After all, what counts as "a problem" for the OU? As in every institution, there are numerous unknowns, difficulties to be overcome, areas of uncertainty. Some - but certainly not all of these - can sensibly be researched. And, in practice, defining IR as "providing information for decision makers" is often complicated by the fact that organisations and committees do not make rational decisions in a context free of political and economic forces. Also any implication that an IR researcher can be a technician supplying totally "neutral" information is a dangerous misconception.

Under the heading of institutional research a great range of issues and topics is subsequently under scrutiny in the Institute. Projects vary considerably from one another: some studies are basic or theoretical (e.g. the underlying models of teaching that are prevalent in the OU); others are more immediately practical and nuts and bolts (e.g. how many presently registered students have bought recommended texts?). While some studies are of short duration,

measured in days or weeks, others demand years of detailed study. Likewise, projects are chosen on different bases - some commissioned by a committee, pro-vice-chancellor, dean, regional director, or course team chairman; others are not commissioned as such, but are initiated by the researchers themselves, who regard themselves occasionally as being in a better position than academic administrators to identify a problem worthy of study. Where there is an outside request for a project to be undertaken, negotiations are usually required: not all problems are researchable in the form in which they are originally conceived. Equally, self-initiated projects have to find interested parties if their reports are subsequently to be noticed and acted upon. Studies also differ in that some are retrospective, looking back and discovering what happened, whereas others are looking to hitherto unrecognised or newly emerging problems (e.g. the educational consequences of cut-backs). Finally, studies differ in their degree of focus - some relating to a precise question (e.g. why is drop-out so much higher in one region of the country?), others providing more of a routine service (e.g. setting up and maintaining student record data), and still others documenting a wide area (e.g. examples throughout the university of low-resource courses).

The following are some examples of IR investigations within the Institute. It does not comprise a complete listing but highlights some of the major areas of current or recent investigation.

A major area of work is in evaluation of courses. Selected courses have been tested during the development stage, using small groups of paid volunteers or students to give feedback on materials at the writing and design stage. There are regular procedures for obtaining student feedback on new courses via questionnaires sent out at interim points throughout the first year in which the course is presented. Tutors, employed part-time by the University to tutor and counsel about 20 students each, are also systematically canvassed for their reactions to new courses. The Institute is responsible for another form of feedback to course teams: regular details of student performance, dropout, and other statistics are provided on a monthly basis. There is also an annual evaluation exercise, in which samples of students from a wide range of courses are approached. The results of this major survey are used for making comparisons between courses, as well as between different media used within individual courses: e.g. what was more useful, the television broadcasts, the text, or the tutoring? One practical consequence of such studies has been to increase the University's development of the video cassette alternative to television; similar studies of the University's radio programmes have led to widespread use of audio cassettes.

A second major area of IR work involves studies of the teaching/learning interface in the context of education at a distance. One group, studying learning from textual sources, is using reading recorders to reveal the actual movements of the eyes over pages of teaching text. These studies, under experimental conditions, are concerned to explore the complicated relationship between textual layout, typography, use of figures and diagrams, readability, the maintaining of attention and the conveying of meaning. There are also studies of particular aspects of OU teaching materials, for instance the in-text questions provided for self-checking of comprehension. Do students actually use these, or are they ignored? (The summary answer is that they are used but not always in the way intended.) Another interface studied is the student's learning from television programmes. One study has been based on interviews in depth with students studying a foundation course and on direct experiments involving viewing programmes followed by "stimulated recall". Students' experience of programmes is often at variance with producers' expectations; and roughly the same number "get the point" as do readers of texts.

A third major area of work relates to the experiences of OU students; for instance, their orientation to study, how their OU involvement fits into career aspirations and personal goals; and what the factors are that, cumulatively, push some students to voluntary withdrawal from a course despite having paid the fee, received the materials, and attended tutorials. And there is naturally concern, given the University's goal of being open to all, with barriers to access: certain groups in the population are under-represented in the Open University and there are many predictors of performance which have to do with age and educational qualifications. Studies of groups of enquirers who do not go on to actually apply to enter the University, as well as of registered students, throw light on social, geographical, financial and educational factors that affect both participation and performance. Annual studies are done of real costs of doing an Open University course and what kinds of financial constraints are imposed. There are investigations, too, of students' reactions to their tutoring and of what factors govern whether or not they attend. Participant observation type studies have also been conducted in summer schools.

A fourth area of work has to do with studies of the system in operation, the OU at work. So many different kinds of teaching innovation have taken place that monitoring what the OU does, and what kinds of options in course design have been tried out, is itself a major task. The Institute maintains an

information bank about distance teaching and learning. The actual process of course writing is done in course teams and the social psychological dynamics of a group of academics writing together turn out to be very complicated; these are being studied within IET. Researchers have also studied the writing and productivity problems experienced in course teams. Of course, institutional researchers are also responsible for taking part more directly in making the University's educational operations run more smoothly and effectively - e.g. in setting up a system of student feedback for use in summer schools, or in setting up an improved system of computer marked assignments.

A fifth area of IR work has to do with evaluating and applying new technology. Microcomputers have been incorporated in several courses where their reliability in use by students is being evaluated. Word-processing equipment has been introduced on an experimental basis at the course writing stage. One researcher has been developing and evaluating modifications to existing word-processing programmes to suit the special needs of the University. Evaluation of teaching through radio-vision and audio-vision (broadcast or tape-recorded sound "track" commenting on printed text and illustrations) in certain courses has also provided guidelines for future use. New media in terms of video tape and video disc used interactively are also being studied. A major study of Cyclops, a television "blackboard" for tutors and students operated by the telephone system, was recently completed though its further development has been hampered by lack of funds.

In short, under the heading of institutional research a considerable volume of work is being carried out across the whole range of the University's educational activities. The difficulty is not so much in finding research to do but rather in deciding between the many possibilities. Researchers, in fixing priorities, are inevitably brought up against the need to balance long-term pay-offs against short-term ones, choosing between an urgent problem now and an issue that will be urgent in two or three years time, but is not yet widely regarded as problematic. Then again the IR researcher has sometimes to choose whether to work on a trivial topic requested by a powerful person in the University or to work on a fascinating and far-reaching problem of interest to someone with lower status. Such balancing acts are the stuff of working life for institutional researchers: it makes for a demanding and difficult working life, not without its frustrations. On the other hand, if it is dull, the researcher has only himself or herself to blame.

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

COMPUTER ASSISTED LEARNING AT THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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Background: The principal use of Computer Assisted Learning (CAL) is for the teaching of programming. Other major areas of use include computer-based tutorials for difficult concepts, learning about standard database and statistical packages for mathematics and the social sciences and the use of simulations in science and technology. CAL is used in some form by all the faculties of the University except Arts. Currently the main form of access to CAL is via computer terminals located in some 260 of the University's study centres. These terminals are connected to a national network of mainframe computers. Students increasingly use terminals at their place of work, public locations (e.g. libraries) or home and 'dial-up' one of the mainframe computers. Students also use microcomputers at day and summer schools. There also continues to be substantial non-interactive use of CAL whereby the student receives through the post answers to a computer marked quiz or the output from a simulation package.

New developments: In the last couple of years developments have been primarily in the areas of teaching programming to novices and designing simulations. The SOLO programming language developed for use by psychology students has been provided with a number of user-aids such as spelling correction, prompts and error checking. Special purpose home-computers with peripherals such as heat and tilt sensors, motors and buzzers have been devised and manufactured in thousands to teach professional audiences such as managers, engineers and school teachers the principles of real time computing. Both SOLO and the programming languages associated with these new microcomputers have been designed to make it easy for the novice learner to 'see the works' as their programs are input and run.

Education students now are able to use a set of simulated pupils on the mainframe computers that exhibit various standard wrong strategies when manipulating fractions. Science students at summer school are now provided with simulations which depict systems graphically on stand alone microcomputers. A third type of simulation facility recently provided is a genetics package which produces printed output of simulated experiments which would be impossible for the students to run themselves.

The most important development in the area of delivery of CAL to students is that whilst three years ago home microcomputers were very rare, we now find that 48% of students have reliable access to microcomputer. This makes it possible to mail CAL software on cassette or floppy disc to students and this is currently being done on specialist courses for school teachers. One interesting enhancement of mainframe CAL use is the Merlin hybrid CAL/telephone system which makes it possible for any student using a physics tutorial to ask for help and prompt a short telephone discussion with a single physics tutor located at one of the mainframe computers.

Successful experiments have been carried out with Cyclops, a hybrid telewriting/telephone system that enables a group of say 20 students and a tutor to communicate via speech and drawing using their home televisions and telephones. The difficulty with Cyclops (as with current videotext systems) is that they require expensive special purpose equipment. In the case of Cyclops and videotext an attempt is being made to develop chips with these functions designed in so that they can be plugged in to conventional home microcomputers.

Research activity: The three main general areas of research are delivery technology, tutorial CAL and student modelling.. Currently an experiment is being carried out with OPTEL (the Universities own videotext system) for use in providing information about educational credit transfer. In the long term the videodisc with its tremendous storage capacity could obviously be very useful for the University. For example a single videodisc with its 54,000 frames could hold all the colour illustrations in all the University's current courses. However videodisc players are expensive and there is no single standard. Currently experiments are being carried out with teaching technology topics using a videodisc controlled by a microcomputer. There is also work that should soon reach fruition in the use of speech synthesis for blind students and home robot kit for use by advanced students studying the industrial applications of computers. Research work in tutorial CAL has been based on systematic evaluations of the current use by students. This has then been used to help improve the functioning of existing tutorial systems. Related work has been carried out in the development of new authoring systems for tutorial CAL which take advantage of the graphics capabilities of modern microcomputers.

Work in student modelling is very important if the potential of the computer for adaptive individual instruction is to be realised. Areas that are being studied include physics problem-solving, mathematical reasoning and programming.

In each case protocols of human performance (often collected using Cyclops equipment) are used to develop computer models of student strategies. This work uses the techniques and methods of artificial intelligence. Our research work in the development of intelligent text editors and authoring systems for industrial computer based training also makes use of artificial intelligence.

Conclusion: The main challenges currently being faced by the OU are to find ways of taking advantage of the rapidly increasing student access to microcomputers with graphics facilities and to apply artificial intelligence methods to our CAL systems to make it easier to author new material and in order to improve their responsiveness to the individual student.

CAL research at the OU is co-ordinated by a Research Group that includes staff from Academic Computing Services, the Institute of Educational Technology and five of the faculties. A list of some forty CAL technical reports is available from the group's vice-chairman Ann Jones (Institute of Educational Technology). Recent work is described in a new book 'The Computer Revolution in Education: New Technologies for Distance Teaching', published by Harvester and edited by Ann Jones, Eileen Scanlon and Tim O'Shea.

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THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

DEVELOPMENT OF NON-BROADCAST VIDEO AT THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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There are three main lines of development in this area, centering on video cassette, computer-controlled video cassette and computer-controlled video disc (interactive video).

The use of video cassette has been explored as a catalyst and information source for group discussions. The video is designed to be watched in short, approximately five-minute sections, after which the group interrupts the tape to discuss what they have seen, sometimes prompted by further information in accompanying texts. When discussion is exhausted, they return to the next section of video.

Interactive video cassette is being used to explore students' response to a complex medium combining both computer assisted learning and television. The project is also exploring the feasibility of using existing video cassette material for this. An OU television programme has been re-edited into a sequence of 4-6 minute sections, each of which can be accessed by the student at any time, via the computer interface. In addition to the video sequences, they can also run computer-based texts and exercises relating to each video sequence. The project is investigating the optimal balance of control between program and user, and the desirable features of the user interface that would make interactive video an effective learning medium.

An interactive video disc is also being developed for use at summer school. This uses some existing video material, and some material that is specially filmed, to provide, for example, large numbers of still frames of information that the student can consult. Computer software is being specially designed to interact closely with the video material, and to provide the student with a highly active and challenging learning task. The material is designed to provide both detailed computer-based exercises on the technicalities of, in this case, the properties of materials, and video sequences that synthesise the theoretical details into the full complexity of a real-world problem. The interactive software is designed to allow the student to take part in calculations, decision making and problem solving, at each level of complexity. The disc is expected to be complete by May 1984.

It is expected that computer-controlled video could be provided for individual use at learning centres such as summer schools, study centres, libraries etc. Video cassettes alone can already be used to an extent by students at home (the percentage of students with convenient access to VCR equipment is currently around 40%). Student access to microcomputers is increasing rapidly (currently 34%). This means that in the UK, we can look ahead to interactive video being available to reasonable numbers of students on a personal basis, in five to ten years time. Further information is available on all the above projects.

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

A STUDENT VIEW

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To students, the most immediately obvious consequence of current government policy is that they are required, through fees and by provision of their own ancillary materials, to cover a greater proportion of the cost of their education. Yet even if the students paid no fees, OU graduates would cost the state considerably less than those of other institutions. But the higher price of being an OU student is increasingly hard to meet: an ever greater proportion of interested people are not accepting offered places; students are taking courses at a slower rate; course choice is restricted (by avoidance of summer schools and their extra costs); and the institution itself is affected in a number of ways, the most worrying of which is the steady southernward slide of the University's centre of gravity.

There are constant declarations, in both academic and government circles, of determination to increase equality of opportunity and to extend access but in reality access is being narrowed and inequality increasing. This is not so much a question of resource as of commitment. Without increased spending, but with a small shift of resource from conventional provision to distance, part-time learning, educational opportunities could be offered to greater numbers of students and to a wider range from outside the traditional catchment pool.

The second undesirable consequence of government policy is less immediate and, unlike the first, could be avoided by the OU itself ... but I fear that it won't be. The University is aging and becoming conservative. This might not matter if money were plentiful and individual innovative ideas could be 'indulged' but the inadequate resources are causing a drift back towards traditional patterns. Increasingly, staff are accepting the importance of 'specialist' degrees. The number of courses produced is being reduced to cut expenditure - the first to go are the 'U' courses, those not based in a faculty but drawing on discipline across the University - the newest, most unusual type of undergraduate course. The traditional areas - the faculties - are being treated less severely by academic decision makers than the regional (closer to the student) support services. Students, however, feel strongly that in the short term, at least, the emphasis should be on satisfactorily presenting and teaching existing courses to students rather than producing new courses to satisfy their academic creators.

Moreover, where tradition was initially questioned, the OU now has its own orthodoxy which itself needs to be challenged. Some thought is being given to whether all courses need to have the same basic format and components, but this is largely concentrated on what can be omitted rather than looking at the question anew. There is little sign of change in the methods of course production.

The third potential consequence, if current government policies persist, is one not yet apparent to many students but greatly feared by some of us. It is the destruction of the OU as an open, undergraduate institution. If fees again rise sharply, if adequate financial assistance for those in greatest need is not available, if tutorial and other student support is reduced, student numbers will start to fall and the University will spiral downwards.

This is more likely if the conflict of interests which now, newly, exists between staff and students is not resolved. The natural move to conservatism of an established institution and an aging staff is being reinforced by fear engendered by the financial situation. Naturally, academics - who hold the decision making power through Senate - are concerned for their own careers. They must, however, recognise that for many students tenure is a luxury and that to insist on the maintenance of a relaxed, 'academically free' work style is indulgence. Academics must be seen to be committed to their students as well as to their discipline. Flexibility in working practices is needed, with academics taking more responsibilities for tutoring and assessing and greater effort must go into designing courses that with minimal re-writing can have longer lives.

Conservatism is essentially defensive; we must take care that in defending our own interests we do not attack one another. The University is under severe financial pressure and all partners in the 'community of scholars' must, together, attack the problem of ensuring that the damage to its essential nature is minimal.

* Pamela McNay is an Open University student. She is a former President of the Open University Students Association.

FRANCE

CENTRES DE TELE-ENSEIGNEMENT UNIVERSITAIRE
ECOLE NORMALE SUPERIEURE DE SAINT-CLOUD

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In France, 18 university centres undertake distance teaching. A specialized research unit and a production unit of the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Saint-Cloud cooperate with them and provide logistic and pedagogical support.

Les Centres de Télé-Enseignement Universitaire (CTU)

Origins: 18 universities have CTUs, which have developed progressively, beginning in 1963-64 with 5 Radio-Propédeutiques, soon renamed Radio Universitaires and then Centres de Télé-Enseignement Universitaires since they undertake Télé-Enseignement Universitaire (TEU). The centres were initially intended to enable isolated students to study arts at the level of the first two years of university (then called Propédeutique, now leading to the Diplôme d'études universitaires générales (DEUG)). The initial objective was the upgrading of elementary school teachers as secondary school teachers. TEU now caters for all kinds of students, providing initial training and 'éducation permanente'.

Students: The 18 CTUs have a total of approximately 20,000 students, of whom 40% are older than 21 years, and 30% are older than 25. More than 80% of students have a full-time job. Students are required to possess the Baccalauréat or an equivalent degree.

Courses: The level of courses ranges from DEUG to licence and maitrise. The following subjects are offered:- arts (French literature, philosophy, psychology, history, geography) and languages (English, German, Spanish, Italian, Polish, Russian, Arabic, Portuguese, Breton), law and economics, applied mathematics, education, applied foreign languages, economic and social management, music, mathematical studies, physics.

The language of instruction is French and the credit system is the same as in other French universities.

Media and methods: The centres' systems were originally built around one predominant medium (usually radio, but in one system television) supported by correspondence materials. Multi media methods have quickly developed, involving the use of audio-visual media (radio, audio cassettes and television), printed materials, student work sessions and short seminars.

The printed materials and audio cassettes are produced by the universities. Radio programmes are either produced in universities' own studios or in the studios of the regional network FR3. Television programmes are produced mainly by ENS of Saint-Cloud and in some instances by FR3.

Assessment: Students take the same examinations as internal university students, but also benefit from teacher-marked examinations and self-assessment tests.

Control and institutional research

Academic control is the responsibility of university personnel and authorities.

The CTUs have few if any research facilities. They call upon the help of the ENS of Saint-Cloud Laboratoire des Techniques et Méthodes Modernes d'Education.

Finance: The CTUs are financed by the universities through special allowances provided by a bureau of the Ministry of Education (Higher Education Branch). This bureau (DESUP 11) is responsible for TEU personnel working in the universities.

Ecole Normale Supérieure de Saint-Cloud

Laboratoire des Techniques et Méthodes Modernes d'Education (TMME) and Université Audio-Visuel (UAV) (until 1980 combined in the Centre Audio-Visuel)

Origins: In 1963 a special sector called 'télé-enseignement universitaire' (TEU) was added to the Centre Audio-Visuel, which comprised a research laboratory on audio-visual methods created in 1947, a production division (1953), and a training division (1956). The activities of TEU were allocated to 49 staff members (researchers, teachers, documentalists, administrators, and 36 technicians and production personnel). This section of the Centre Audio-Visuel provided logistic support to the 18 university distance education branches created from 1963-64 on. The responsibilities

of the Centre, now divided between the Laboratoire des TMME and UAV, comprise research in distance education, training, production of materials, and organisational assistance.

Students: Because of the nature of their activities, the two units have no students. Their short training courses are aimed at teachers.

Courses: ENS of Saint-Cloud has no courses of its own for distance students. It helps universities in producing experimental courses and media for regular courses.

Media and methods: ENS produces all types of media, but for higher education distance studies, production is mainly concentrated on experimental programmes on radio and on audio-cassette, and on television programmes for universities and for in-service training of doctors.

Control and institutional research: The Laboratoire des TMME research team 'Enseignement universitaire à distance' has been undertaking studies, research and evaluation since 1963 on the methods and media used in TEU and on the target groups, as well as on the results achieved through distance teaching methods.

Research activities are under the control of the 'Conseil de la Recherche' of the ENS, and the 'Conseil des Programmes' controls production activities.

Finance: Research and production are funded partly by the ENS and partly directly by the Ministry of Education.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. 1. EVOLUTION OF OBJECTIVES: The French system of university teaching at a distance were at first designed for initial training. The upgrading of elementary school teachers to become secondary school teachers was also a major objective. This was considered to be initial training since the elementary school teachers had at that time never had the opportunity of being university students, but it could also be considered as retraining and 'formation permanente'.

Increasingly the CTUs cater at the same time for students having their first chance of higher education and for people who have had university training and who are taking the opportunity of TEU for upgrading their knowledge and participating in 'éducation permanente'. In addition to the target groups, an increasing audience which does not always register to study takes advantage of the opportunities offered by the CTUs on

the air and in other ways. Housewives and retired people constitute a part of this audience.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. 2. RISE IN LEVEL OF STUDIES OFFERED: Originally, most CTUs offered the opportunity of studying at a distance only for the first two years of university (now termed DEUG). More and more CTUs have begun to offer in addition courses leading to the licence (3 years of university) and to the maîtrise (4 years). At the present time 17 universities offer a total of 86 DEUG at a distance, 18 universities offer 57 licences, and 6 universities offer 9 maîtrises.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. 3. INCREASE IN SUBJECTS OFFERED: In 1963-64 the only subjects offered were in arts and technology. Technology courses were discontinued, but the number of arts subjects increased. Law and economics were introduced during the 1970s, followed by the subjects listed after law and economics in the CTU Courses section above.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. 4. CHANGES IN MEDIA: In 1963 all participating universities had 4 hours radio per week. The number of hours increased until in the mid 1970s most universities had 18 hours. Since the, the number of hours has decreased to a maximum of 5 hours per university per week (except for Radio Sorbonne with 10 hours), some having only between 1 and 3 hours. In 1983 the total number of hours of university radio is 53½ per week.

The volume of production has not changed; it has even increased in some universities, but programme distribution is by audio cassette and not over the air. All CTUs have multi-copying machines. They produce very large numbers of audio cassettes which are mostly sold to students. In 1981-82, excluding the many copies made from radio programmes and including only recordings originally produced for cassette distribution, 5 universities have distributed between 2,000 and 5,000 copies, 3 between 5,000 and 10,000, 3 between 10,000 and 20,000, and 2 more than 20,000.

The use of television is still exceptional and is largely experimental; around 40 26 minute broadcasts per year are transmitted on the regional network FR3. Outside the official TEU there are also 24 broadcasts per year on national Antenne 2 for in-service training of doctors.

Video cassettes are not yet used since the great majority of students do not have video tape recorders at home. The same applies to courseware

in informatics since too few students own computers.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS. 5. COOPERATION BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES: It was hoped that several universities would follow the example of Besançon, Dijon, Nancy II, Reims and Strasbourg II, which cooperated in "Entente de l'Est" and took charge respectively of the teaching of history, French literature, English, psychology and philosophy, and German. Unhappily this was not the case and "weddings" between Rennes-Caen, and Bordeaux-Toulouse did not materialize.

However, certain universities, particularly in the areas of law, economics and English, use some materials produced in other universities. The most fruitful exchange is with overseas French-speaking universities, particularly in developing countries.

RECENT RESEARCH ACTIVITIES: In general, the CTUs do not conduct research activities since they do not have specialised personnel or enough money to contract research. However, they call upon university colleagues. In this way, for example, Toulouse II University has been able in 1980-81 to publish a research report on the role of distance education. Studies and research activities on teaching at a distance have been conducted since 1963 by several researchers of the Centre Audio-Visuel of Saint-Cloud. Since 1980, all research is carried out by the Laboratore des TMME, most of it by the team "Enseignement universitaire à distance".

Several phases can be distinguished in the research activities:-

- From 1963 to 1970, studies were made on many aspects of the recently created distance education systems. Researchers were "feeling their way".
- From 1970 to 1972, the first studies on the attitudes of students and teachers towards TEU were conducted, mainly with the University of Dijon.
- From 1972 to 1977, research on the impact of radio and television broadcasts in several universities.
- From 1977 to 1979, study of the target groups and of all the pedagogical components (including audio-visual media) used in TEU.
- From 1980 to 1982, study in depth of a system (CTU of Lille III University) and of the typology of audio-visual media, mainly radio.

The research programme for 1983 and 1984 includes:-

- the completion of studies conducted on the typology of university television and of audio tapes

- the continuation of studies on the applications of the new communication technologies to university teaching at a distance
- the beginning of new research on the history of distance education, multimedia methodology in distance education, analysis of content of audio-visual course components, experimental production of television and of audio tapes, and form of learning of distance education students.

SWEDEN

DISTANCE EDUCATION IN SWEDISH UNIVERSITIES

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Origins: An important educational goal in Sweden has been to increase access to higher education, making recurrent education available even for employed adults living out of reach of the university towns. New university entrance requirements have been gradually introduced. These permit adults over the age of 25 who have been employed for at least 4 years to study certain subjects at university, even though they do not meet the ordinary requirements of upper secondary schooling. Distance education, which represents one way of achieving the goal of increased access, was initiated by the 1968 University Planning Committee (U68) and began in the academic year 1973/74 as an experimental activity. The first courses started in September 1973. The main pedagogical idea behind the experimental activity was to test different methods of teaching students who can join the residential courses at the univeristy for short periods only.

Students: In 1983/84 there are 9,000 students and 300 courses are offered. The largest student group is composed of part-time students in employment; the majority of students are more than 30 years old. Entrance requirements are the same for distance education as for all university education. Distance students do not constitute any special group compared to other adult students at the university.

Courses: Distance education is regarded as a supplementary form of study parallel to evening classes, local external courses and, to some extent, to full degree programmes. Most distance education comprises separate single-subject 5, 10 or 20 points courses, and the courses are mostly the same as those studied by on-campus students. The scope of a given study programme is measured using a points system, one point being equivalent to one week of full-time study, and 40 points adding up to one academic year. The single-subject courses at a distance are offered at a "slow pace", which means that one semester's course is offered over two semesters. The single-subject courses, taken one by one, can sometimes make up a full university degree. Some general study programmes are also taught at a distance.

Distance education is offered in the following university areas: law, theology, health care, social sciences, natural sciences, technology, forestry, journalism, and teacher training. Uppsala University offers distance courses to Swedish people living abroad.

Media and methods: The same textbooks are used as in the ordinary university courses, and the same examinations are held with regard to both form and content. In the Swedish model, the students have the opportunity to choose different educational forms at the university at different points in time, and indeed do so. The distance programme is based mainly on self-studies as are traditional university studies in general. Course material consists mainly of printed study guides and assignments intended to be sent in to the university departments at regular intervals. In order to overcome distance and to increase teacher-student contact, meetings are held at the university, and the telephone service and audio cassettes are used.

Support for student learning: In the decentralized Swedish model the contact between student and teacher is central. Meetings at the university and use of the telephone service have been the main methods of establishing contact. The student often during the entire period of the course has one teacher whom he or she can contact regarding all types of problems.

Organisation and administration: The Swedish distance model is highly decentralized. The responsibility for undertaking distance education rests with the individual university departments, which at the same time organise other forms of university education. The departments are responsible for subject content and for the planning of courses, as well as for creating and using special methods for distance education. The national planning responsibility for distance education during the experimental period was in the hands of the Office of the Chancellor of the Universities, but after the 1977 Reform it was transferred to the newly established six Regional Boards. Regular cooperation takes place between the Regional Boards in the planning of the distance course offerings.

Resources: Distance education courses are allocated the same amount of resources as traditional university education. As the amount of face-to-face teaching is less than in regular university courses, money can be used to pay for the telephone service, to produce teaching materials etc.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS: As both students and teachers are generally satisfied with distance courses in Swedish universities, there has been little need to develop new technical methods or forms of media. There is, of course, a strong need for continuous evaluation. Educational development takes place when new courses are being planned. The Regional Boards examine the proposals to find the best one. They also discuss how to find appropriate courses in technology, which will be useful in the area of recurrent education.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES: Research on distance education at university level has been rare in Sweden, as in most countries. Almost all such research work in Sweden has been done in the Educational Department of Uppsala University. One of the reasons for this is that the work on the evaluation of the experiments with distance courses at Swedish universities was undertaken in this University Department.

The evaluation study (Willén 1981, 1983a, 1984) covered a number of different aspects of the experimental activities. Interviews have been held with the teachers and administrators involved, who have also answered questionnaires about planning, administration and teaching. Questionnaires have been distributed to students at the beginning and at the end of the term. These covered background data, work situation, study motives, planned and actual amount of time for studies, study breaks and other problems, use of special teaching aids and attitudes toward different components in the teaching programme. A follow-up study of the distance students was carried out five years after they started with the distance course. The work is presented in a doctoral dissertation (Willén 1981) which ends with a discussion of the decentralized Swedish model in relation to other systems and the international debate. Dahllöf (1977) carried out a comparison between distance education at university level in Australia and Sweden which is closely related to the Swedish evaluation.

Since 1981 a new distance education project "National policy and distance education at the tertiary level in a comparative perspective" (Dahllöf & Willén 1981) has been under way. The purpose of the project is to illustrate in a comparative perspective the planning and actual development of distance education at the tertiary level in its national context and particularly to pay attention to the general environment and specific frame conditions, e.g. factors concerning demography, geography, communications and organization. A historical view of educational policy and university

traditions is also important. Comparisons will be made between the following countries; Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark (Willén 1983b), Australia, New Zealand and some of the Canadian provinces.

One important way of looking at different models of distance education is to examine the respective situations and characteristics of students. A comparative study of students in the highly decentralized Swedish system, and in the highly centralized Fernuniversität in West Germany, will therefore be undertaken. In this comparison the research instruments from the evaluation study in Sweden will be employed.

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AUSTRALIA

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION RESEARCH COMMITTEE

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The ICDE Research Committee was set up in late 1982 by the new ICDE Executive elected at the 12th World Conference in Vancouver in June 1982. It comprises D. Keegan (Chairman), J. Ansere (Nigeria), A. Bates (UK), A. Gupta (India), B. Holmberg (F.R. Germany), A. Morgan (UK), J. Palavicini Esponda (Canada), T. Rekkedal (Norway), D. Shale (Canada), J. Taylor (Australia), B. Willén (Sweden), and H. Markowitz (USA). The role of the ICDE Research Committee is:

(1) To promote research on distance education throughout the world

(2) To promote research on distance education throughout the world

(3) To report on distance education in the period 1982-1985 at the 13th World Conference to be held in Melbourne, Australia, in August, 1985

(4) To award grants for research on distance education.

The Research Committee is working on a number of projects.

(1) It will attempt to present an annual report on Research on Distance Education to be published in the ICDE Bulletin annually and an overall report in Melbourne in 1985 on activities from 1982-1985. In these reports it will hope to monitor work in French, Spanish and German as well as in English.

(2) The Research Committee is attempting to count the number of students studying at a distance throughout the world. Its members have been asked to report on this statistic to the Chairman by December 1983.

(3) The Committee has been awarded a grant allocation of $15,000 which it will distribute with an average of $2,500 going to each of the six continents. Applications have been called for and close with the various regional representatives of the Research Committee by the end of December, 1983. It is hoped to announce the awards by March, 1984 and to receive the completed projects in time for their presentation at the World Conference in Melbourne in 1985.

(4) The ICDE Research Committee is also undertaking its own research project. The project will focus on feedback in distance education and it has been decided to replicate the study done by Torstein Rekkedal in Norway in 1973, on the turnaround time of assignments in distance education. Rekkedal found - in a well-known and well contructed study - that, most distance education institutions in the world consider that a fortnight turnaround time from the time an assignment leaves the student until it is received back with gradings and comments from the institution is satisfactory; most students, however, start to turn off and consider dropping out if the delay in turnaround time goes beyond seven days. It has been decided to replicate this study ten years after it was done and to do this on each of the six continents with students of varying backgrounds and levels of study. This project is being led by Mr JC Taylor of the Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education and is to be completed before the Melbourne Conference of the ICDE in August, 1985.

UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY/INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

DISTANCE TEACHING INSTITUTIONS: A NEW COMPUTERIZED DATABASE

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A new computerized database is now accessible to everyone with an involvement or an interest in distance education. It contains basic information on distance teaching institutions and proejcts throughout the world. The database has been developed in the International Documentation Centre for Distance Learning with funding from the United Nations University (UNU) and in cooperation with the International Council for Distance Education and the OU. The project is the first activity of the International Centre for Distance Learning, which is being established with Lord Perry, founding Vice-Chancellor of the OU, as Honorary Director, Keith Harry as Documentation Officer, and Nazira Ismail as Information and Documentation Assistant.

The information in the database has been obtained from individual institutions through the use of a standard form translated into French, German, Portuguese and Spanish. The categories of information are: names and addresses of institutions, together with details of subject areas taught, media used, total numbers of students, staff and distance taught courses, entrance qualifications, overall educational level, language of instruction, whether or not fees are charged, and whether or not course materials are available for sale, distribution or exchange to other institutions. Each category can be searched individually (e.g. which institutions reach at a distance using radio?) or in combination (e.g. who teaches degree level science courses in Spanish?). The Documentation Centre can supply printouts containing details of those institutions which match search profiles. The file is not yet complete, but it is intended that by the end of March 1984 every distance teaching institution and project which can be traced (with the exception of institutions in the Soviet Union) will have been approached for information. The database will be updated annually.

The 1984 UNU grant to the Documentation Centre is to enable the continued expansion and updating of the database and to fund the accompanying information service. The UNU contract also specifies that an investigation be undertaken to determine the possibility of establishing a computerized bibliographical database in the Documentation Centre. This second database would include details of documents relating to distance education, and would supersede the subject card index which is currently maintained and which lists books, journal articles, reports, conference papers and other documents. The

investigation will cover three major areas: 1) the scope and operation of existing computerized bibliographical databases which cover education, and the relationship between the database producers and the distributing communications network, 2) relevant systems being developed and operating in other institutions in the UK and overseas, and 3) new technology and systems in the OU. The database which is presently operating in the Documentation Centre uses the Remote Processing System of the OU's Univac mainframe computer and is only accessible on the OU campus, so that all enquiries must be directed to the Documentation Centre. The 1984 investigation will examine means of making the second database accessible on-line to users outside the OU and outside the UK. Detailed consideration will also be given to making the database accessible to countries from which it is not at present possible to gain on-line access.

The International Documentation Centre on Distance Learning serves users both within the OU and outside. A great number of its contacts and correspondents are overseas. The Documentation Centre's collecting activities are in four main areas: a) theoretical and general works on distance education, b) course materials produced by distance teaching institutions, c) documents produced by and about distance teaching institutions and projects, and d) documents on education provision in all countries. There is no particular concentration on any one part of the world nor on any one educational level (although higher education is particularly well represented); the aim is to monitor all distance teaching everywhere. The collection contains around 10,000 documents. There is no overall catalogue, but a new accessions list is produced 3-4 times per year and distributed to many individuals and institutions throughout the world. Newly acquired documents relating to distance education are indexed, and entries are filed in the subject card index which was mentioned above.

All of the institutions and countries which are documented in this Newsletter, together with many more, are represented in the Documentation Centre, and entries for many of the institutions are already in the computerized database. Enquiries about the Documentation Centre and about any aspect of its work or the information it contains are always welcomed.

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